Program Management Committee

Issue Brief: 1-1

Strategic Investment Fund

2017 Allocation

26 February 2017

CGIAR is a global partnership that unites organizations engaged in research for a food-secure future. The CGIAR Research Program on Livestock provides research-based solutions to help smallholder farmers, pastoralists and agro-pastoralists transition to sustainable, resilient livelihoods and to productive enterprises that will help feed future generations. It aims to increase the productivity of livestock agri-food systems in sustainable ways, making meat, milk and eggs more available and affordable across the developing world. The Program brings together five core partners: the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) with a mandate on livestock; the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), which works on forages; the International Center for Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), which works on small ruminants and dryland systems; the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) with expertise particularly in animal health and genetics and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) which connects research into development and innovation and scaling processes.

The Program thanks all donors and organizations who globally supported its work through their contributions to the [**CGIAR system**](http://www.cgiar.org/about-us/our-funders/)

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**Livestock CRP**

**Strategic Investment Fund: 2017 Allocation**

**The Issue**

The Livestock CRP proposal included a Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) facility that had been initiated under the Livestock & Fish CRP. It is funded from Window 1/2 funds, to be allocated by the PMC as an instrument for adaptive management. The proposed allocation of the SIF for 2017 is presented for PMC endorsement.

**Considerations**

In the Livestock CRP proposal, we described the Strategic Investment Fund as follows:

*The Strategic Investment Fund, to be allocated annually to research or management activities as proposed by PPMC and approved by ISC; this will represent 5-10% of the annual W1/2 funded budget. This represents the principal instrument for adaptive management available to CRP management in addition to reallocation of existing funding to specific activities or flagships. The Strategic Investment Fund is used for:*

* *Specific cross-cutting activities for gender, capacity development, youth, M&E, data management, communication relevant to the overall CRP and therefore not covered under flagship budgets, e.g. development of the CRP youth strategy*
* *Impact assessments*
* *Competitive calls for target country, cross-flagship, or cross-CRP activities*
* *Priority resource mobilization initiatives, including seed grants for developing cross-CRP collaboration to support proposal development*

**Sharpening the investment criteria**

There has been some informal feedback from the System Management Office that at least one donor raised their eyebrows at our description of the SIF, saying that it should be used only for exploring and opening new areas of research and not for cross-cutting or management activities that should normally be budgeted within the usual research and management budgets. This creates a tension with how cross-cutting activities, by their nature, tend to be under-budgeted within flagships, and a tension with seeking to keep our management budget within acceptable limits. It will therefore be important to clarify our criteria for what is considered appropriate for SIF funding. Proposed criteria would include:

* Seed funding for new areas of research not defined in the original proposal research agenda, including funding for calls for specific research needs (e.g. an identified gap, proposed new research opportunity, research related to cross-cutting initiatives, cross-CRP linking research). This should be considered one-off investments that either achieve the needed purpose or are thereafter taken up by flagship funding
* One-off investments needed to implement the CRP that do not appear as normal recurrent management costs, e.g. ‘capital investments’ such as M&E roll-out
* Cross-cutting activities that may not be considered as high priority for individual flagships and so requires some incentive funding, e.g. undertaking an impact assessment on past research that has limited benefit for achieving the 2022 flagship targets

**Potential to be perceived as non-compliance with SC decision**

The description from the proposal clearly stated our intention, well before the SC decision, to use the SIF for priority CRP-level time-bound investments, many of which are needed by the CRP management for guiding the overall CRP strategy and are of a cross-cutting nature. There is the clear risk that using SIF W1/2 funding for these may be interpreted as bypassing the SC decision to not fund the two flagships and cut the management budget accordingly. It is important that we are transparent in our rationale for use of the funding.

**Proposed allocation**

Having noted these considerations, the following are the uses of the SIF proposed for 2017, some of which will be able to use capacity from the two unfunded flagships and to maintain momentum on critical CRP-level priorities despite the reduced management budget.

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| **Activity** | **Allocation** |
| 1. **Impact assessment**: 4 studies are being proposed, of which two can be initiated this year (to be prioritized by PMC). The intention had always been to address the evidence gap on the impact of previous forage research. I would like to argue that while this is a priority need for CRP management to judge potential return to investment, and it would not necessarily benefit the ability of the Feeds & Forages flagship to achieve its 2022 targets, so had not been identified in the proposal as a flagship priority (and so is not indirectly providing W1/2 funding to flagship) | $400,000 |
| 1. **M&E roll-out**: Getting the M&E system we designed and piloted over the last two years will require a major initial effort to further tailor it to our context to finalize it and get it implemented. This also entails any investment needed to establish a baseline of the situation for our flagships and focus countries. It includes a module to facilitate the Theory of Change evidence base for the Flagships and a reflection/learning process for its review, and a module for Change Monitoring at country level. | $500,000 |
| 1. **Gender strategy and mainstreaming:** This involves two main activities:    * Gender strategy consultation and revision, including a rapid assessment of the gender agenda in the flagships and in the focus countries    * Gender mainstreaming coaching and call for projects: This is a one-off effort to follow-up and institutionalize the gender mainstreaming effort led by KIT under L&F, focusing on the 3 flagships approved for W1/2 funding | $500,000 |
| 1. **Youth strategy development:** Supports the Dutch-funded Young Expert to lead a series of assessments and consultations to develop a strategy and then share it for comment | $100,000 |
| 1. **CGIAR country collaboration:** This will be a specific effort to prepare the country teams to prepare country strategies within a Theory of Change framework and in the context of how the evolving CGIAR country collaboration initiative is shaping up. There will be a strong component of partnership coaching. | $50,000 |
| 1. **Capacity development strategy development:** An adequate capacity development strategy was not achieved during L&F, and the context has also been evolving. This activity will involve a series of assessments and consultations that will also contribute to the development of flagship and country specific strategies. Includes the time of staff or a consultant managed by the CapDev coordinator. | $100,000 |
| 1. **Enabling Open Access:** A one-time effort will focus mainly on facilitating the roll-out of the Open Access policy, especially as it relates to data, by assisting CRP activities to comply with data archiving and to facilitate external users to access CRP-generated data. | $110,000 |
| 1. **Prioritization tool development:** The ex-ante impact assessment model used during the proposal development will be strengthened with better data with the objective of improving the reliability of our target estimation and regular prioritization exercises | $100,000 |
| 1. **CRP financial management system development:** The development of a basic online spreadsheet tool for compiling and aggregating budget and expenditure information on a regular basis was delayed in 2016 and will need to be completed this year. | $50,000 |
| 1. **Competitive or targeted research calls:** Suggested priorities are for:    * Cross-flagship proposal development    * Cross-country research    * Cross-CRP activities | $383,000 |
| **TOTAL** | $2,533,000 |

**Action**

For endorsement. Detailed proposals will be prepared for each item, for PMC review and approval. The agreed allocation with a more detailed justification as to why W1/2 support for these activities do not violate the SC decision will then also be shared with the SMO to ensure transparency.

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